

Message Text

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ACTION CU-05

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R 071445Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1157

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SANTO DOMINGO 3240

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, DR

SUBJECT: OPERATION "SHOESTRING" - BINATIONAL CENTER AT SANTIAGO

REF : A) SD 2713; B) SD 2765

1. AMBASSADOR AND DCM AXELROD VISITED SANTIAGO RECENTLY IN PART TO MAKE COURTESY CALLS AND IN PART TO ENSURE THAT MOMENTUM GENERATED DURING DINNER DESCRIBED REF (A) REGARDING INCREASED LOCAL SUPPORT FOR THE BINATIONAL CENTER AT SANTIAGO DID NOT DISSIPATE. BINATIONAL CENTER PRESIDENT FEDERICO CARLOS ALVAREZ AND CENTER DIRECTOR MRS. VIRGINIA VEGA MASTIN HAD ORGANIZED A MEETING OF THE MAIN PILLARS OF SANTIAGO SOCIETY FOLLOWED BY A RECEPTION WHICH AMBASSADOR AND DCM ATTENDED.

2. UPWARD OF SEVENTY-FIVE PERSONS ATTENDED THE MEETING WHICH BY ALL REPORTS WAS CHARACTERIZED BY A VARY FAVORABLE ATTITUDE. THE SPECIFIC FOCUS OF THIS MEETING WAS UPON THE PRECARIOUS CONDITION OF THE CENTER'S OPERATING BUDGET. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY (APART FROM FEES FROM ENGLISH CLASSES) AMOUNTED TO THE ITTANCE OF TWENTY-FOUR MEMBERS PAYING TWELVE PESOS ANNUALLY. AT THE MEETING 56 NEW MEMBERS WERE RECRUITED. IN ADDITION, A NEW CATEGORY OF MEMBERSHIP WAS ESTABLISHED (DISCREETLY AT EMBASSY SUGGESTION), THAT OF "PATRON" WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO OBTAIN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM BUSINESS CONCERNS AS DISTINCT FROM INDIVIDUALS. THIS "PATRON" MEMBERSHIP WAS MADE AVAILABLE

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AT AN ANNUAL FEE OF ONE HUNDRED PESOS. AT THE MEETING, SEVENTEEN

FIRMS PLEDGED AN ANNUAL TOTAL OF TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED PESOS (ONE FIRM PLEDGED FIVE HUNDRED ANNUALLY AND ANOTHER THREE HUNDRED). THE BNC LEADERS FELT THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE POTENTIAL MARKET HAD BEEN TAPPED, BUT THAT WITH JUST THIS RESPONSE THEIR BUDGETARY SITUATION HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY EASED. THEY WILL PURSUE THE OTHER HALF OF POTENTIAL CLIENTS.

3. THE GROUP IS NOW TURNING ITS ATTENTION TO THE FUND FOR A NEW BUILDING. AMB AND DCM VISITED THE LAND OFFERED BY THE MAYOR OF SANTIAGO. IT IS WELL-LOCATED AND OF A SIZE OFFERING MANY POSSIBILITIES. A BUILDING FUND COMMITTEE HAS NOW BEEN FORMED. ALTHOUGH THE CONCEPT OF A NEW BUILDING WAS ONLY LIGHTLY TOUCHED UPON AT THE MEETING, ABOUT A DOZEN LOCAL ENTITIES PLEDGED NINE THOUSAND PESOS TOWARD THE FUND. THE MAIN EFFORT WILL BE UNDERTAKEN SOON AND IF THE ROSY AURA SURROUNDING THE RECEPTION WAS ANY INDICATION, "LAUNCHED" IS PROBABLY THE APPROPRIATE VERB TO DESCRIBE THE BUILDING PROJECT.
HURWITCH

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